

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions of claims in the application:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A continuous method for preparing a fluid diffusion layer comprising a substrate and at least one loading material adhered to the substrate, wherein the at least one loading material is adhered to the substrate by the steps of:

- (a) continuously applying a loading composition comprising the at least one loading material to the substrate, ~~the loading composition further comprising a liquid component wherein~~ the loading material is substantially free of electrocatalyst;
- (b) continuously compacting the substrate and ~~liquid-containing~~ loading composition applied thereto by applying pressure from at least one compaction roller; and
- (c) drying the substrate and the loading composition applied thereto.

Claim 2 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the compacting step is characterized by:  
compacting the substrate and the loading material between two compaction rollers.

Claim 3 (original): The method of claim 2, wherein the two compaction rollers are separated by a predetermined gap.

Claim 4 (original): The method of claim 3, wherein the two compaction rollers apply compacting pressure equivalent to at least 1 bar to the substrate and the loading composition.

Claim 5 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the substrate is pretreated with a hydrophobic polymer before step (a).

Claim 6 (original): The method of claim 1, further comprising:

(d) sintering the fluid diffusion layer.

Claim 7 (original): The method of claim 6, further comprising:

- (e) continuously applying an electrocatalyst composition comprising at least one electrocatalyst to the fluid diffusion layer;
- (f) continuously compacting the fluid diffusion layer and the electrocatalyst applied thereto by applying pressure from at least one roller; and
- (g) drying the fluid diffusion layer and the electrocatalyst composition applied thereto;

whereby the fluid diffusion layer and the electrocatalyst form an electrode.

Claim 8 (original): The method of claim 7, wherein step (f) is characterized by:

compacting the fluid diffusion layer and the electrocatalyst between two compaction rollers.

Claim 9 (original): The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of protecting at least one compaction roller from soiling by disposing a separation film between the protected compaction roller and the loading material.

Claim 10 (original): The method of claim 9, wherein the separation film travels across the protected roller from a first reel to a second reel, whereby clean separation film is continuously disposed between the protected compaction roller and the loading material.

Claim 11 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the loading composition is applied to only one side of the substrate.

Claim 12 (cancelled).

Claim 13 (currently amended): The method of claim [[12]] 21, wherein the liquid is water.

Claim 14 (currently amended): The method of claim [[12]] 21, wherein the substrate and the at least one loading composition are partially dried before the compacting step.

Claim 15 (original): The method of claim 14,  
wherein the loading composition is partially dried to  
remove about 40% or less of the water.

Claim 16 (cancelled).

Claim 17 (cancelled).

Claim 18 (cancelled).

Claim 19 (cancelled).

Claim 20 (cancelled).

Claim 21 (new): The method of claim 1, wherein  
the loading composition comprises a liquid component.